

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EURE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6288
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NICOSIA 2111

USEEC FOR EC BRUSSELS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, CY
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION: DISCUSSION WITH POLITICIAN

1. SUMMARY: ON AUGUST 11 DCM HAS OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONVERSATION WITH RIGHT-WING DEMOCRATIC PARTY HOUSE MEMBER ALEXIS GHALANOS ABOUT PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION. GHALANOS PREDICTED KYPRIANOU WOULD BE UNANIMOUS CANDIDATE FOR SIX-MONTH INTERIM PERIOD; HE WILL RUN AGAIN FOR THE FULL FIVE-YEAR TERM IN FEBRUARY AND IN FEBRUARY HE WILL BE OPPOSED BY PASCALIS PASCALIDES. HE BELIEVES CLERIDES WILL NOT HAVE A CHANCE IN EITHER ELECTION. HE HOPES THE GOVERNMENT OF GREECE WILL INVOLVE ITSELF IN THE CYPRUS POLITICAL SITUATION TO PREVENT A STRENGTHENING OF THE LEFT WING. END SUMMARY.

2. GHALANOS IS A CONSERVATIVE MEMBER OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, A WEALTHY BUSINESSMAN AND A REFUGEE FROM FAMAGUSTA. HE IS A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN HELLENIC INSTITUTE, AND SINCE THE PARLI-
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MENTARY ELECTIONS OF SEPTEMBER 1976 HAS PLAYED AN INCREASINGLY VISIBLE ROLE IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HOUSE. HE IS CURRENTLY A SUPPORTER OF SPYROS KYPRIANOU.

3. GHALANOS OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT ALL INDICATIONS ARE SPYROS KYPRIANOU WILL BE THE SOLE NOMINEE FOR PRESIDENT FOR THE INTERIM PERIOD SEPTEMBER 1977 - FEBRUARY 1978.

THERE ARE TWO OTHER POSSIBLE CANDIDATES, EITHER CLERIDES OR AN INDEPENDENT LIKE PASCALIS PASACLIDES, BUT IT NOW APPEARS THAT NEITHER OF THESE WILL CONTEST KYPRIANOU FOR THE BY-ELECTION. GHALANOS FEELS THIS IS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT BECAUSE IF KYPRIANOU IS UNOPPOSED HE WILL HAVE NO EXCUSE TO CHANGE THE PRESENT CABINET OR TO MAKE SWEEPING CHANGES IN OTHER AREAS OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF HIS POLICY WILL BE TO FOLLOW THE WISHES OF ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS. IF HE IS OPPOSED AND WINDS, HE WILL FEEL FREE TO CHANGE POLICIES AND MINISTERS. THIS COULD ONLY LEAD TO INSTABILITY AND WOULD NOT BE GOOD FOR CYPRUS OR THE WEST. ACCORDING TO GHALANOS, KYPRIANOU HAS THE FIRM SUPPORT OF COMMUNIST AKEL AND SOCIALIST EDEK. THESE TWO CONTROL 45 PERCENT OF THE VOTES. HE EMPHASIZED THAT AKEL AND EDEK HAVE NOT ASKED FOR ANY QUID PROQUO FOR SUPPORT OF KYPRIANOU IN THE BY-ELECTION. HE BELIEVES AKEL DOES NOT WANT A ROLE IN THE DIRECTION OF POLICY AT THIS TIME; AKEL LEADERS CONSIDER THAT THE TIMING IS NOT RIGHT FOR AKEL TO TRY TO BECOME THE DOMINANT FORCE IN CYPRUS. IRONICALLY, HE SAID, THIS MEANS IF KYPRIANOU IS OPPOSED AND CAN COMMAND LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE HIMSELF, AKEL WILL BE LESS INCLINED TO SUPPORT HIM BECAUSE AT THIS TIME THEY DO NOT WANT THE PRESIDENT OF CYPRUS TO BE SEEN TO BE UNDER THEIR CONTROL.

4. GHALANOS BELIEVES COMMISSIONER OF COOPERATIVES GEORGE AZINAS AND HIS POLITICAL ALLY, TASSOS PAPADOPOULOS, CAN ALSO BE BROUGHT TO SUPPORT KYPRIANOU FOR THE INTERIM PERIOD. THE ONLY IMPORTANT CONFIDENTIAL

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POLITICIAN WHO MAY OPPOSE KYPRIANOU IS CLERIDES. LATTER'S PARTY IS COMPOSED OF BUSINESS LEADERS AND THE FAR RIGHT, WHO BELIEVE CLERIDES' CHANCES MAY DIMINISH IN FEBRUARY IF HE DOES NOT MAKE A RUN FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN SEPTEMBER. THIS IS A BAD ANALYSIS, GHALANOS SAID, BECAUSE IF CLERIDES RUNS HE WILL NOT WIN MORE THAN 25 PERCENT OF THE VOTE; KYPRIANOU WITH 75 PERCENT WILL FEEL FREE TO MAKE POLICY AND PERSONNEL CHANGES. THE NET RESULT WILL BE THAT GREEK CYPRIOT POLITICS ARE POLARIZED.

5. ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR GHALANOS SAID, IS THAT THE BISHOP OF PAPHOS WILL SUPPORT KYPRIANOU. THIS MAY SEEM UNLIKELY BECAUSE THE BISHOP IS AN ULTRANATIONALIST OF THE FAR RIGHT BUT, ACCORDING TO GHALANOS, THE TWO HAVE A GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AND A DEAL CAN BE STRUCK IF KYPRIANOU AGREES TO SUPPORT PAPHOS IN THE ELECTIONS FOR ARCHBISHOP. IN THIS CONNECTION, GHALANOS SAID, THE GOC CAN MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION BY USING ITS INFLUENCE WITH THE CYPRIOT ORTHODOX CHURCH TO ASSURE PAPHOS' SUPPORT OF KYPRIANOU.

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6. GHALANOS NOTED THAT PUBLIC INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE GOC WOULD PREFER TO AVOID INVOLVEMENT IN CYPRUS POLITICS. HE BELIEVES THE GOC CANNOT AFFORD THIS LUXURY. WITH THE LOSS OF MAKARIOS, CYPRUS WILL NOT HAVE A STRONG LEADER AND WILL HAVE TO LOOK ELSEWHERE FOR SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE. GREECE CAN PROVIDE LEADERSHIP FOR CYPRUS, BUT THIS WILL INVOLVE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BY THE MOSE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT.

7. GHALANOS CONCEDED THERE IS STRONG OPPOSITION TO KYPRIANOU. THE MOST EFFECTIVE MANIFESTATION OF THIS IS THE POSSIBLE CANDIDACY OF A NEW THIRD FORCE. THE MOST LIKELY INDIVIDUALS ARE PASCALIS PASCALIDES OF HELLENIC MINES AND FINANCE MINISTER ANDREAS PATSALIDES. IF PASCALIDES RUNS IN SEPTEMBER, GHALANOS ESTIMATES HE WILL RECEIVE ABOUT 45 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, WITH KYPRIANOU GARNERING THE REST. THIS WOULD BE BAD FOR CYPRUS BECAUSE IT WOULD PUSH KYPRIANOU TOWARD THE LEFT, TOWARD INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM AND AN ANTI-WEST STANCE FOR THE GOC.
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8. THE SITUATION WILL BE DIFFERENT IN FEBRUARY ACCORDING TO GHALANOS. IT IS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE BUT PROBABLE THAT PASCALIDES

WILL RUN FOR THE PRESIDENCY AT THAT TIME. GHALANOS SAID IT IS TOO EARLY TO SAY HOW THE FEBRUARY ELECTION WILL COME OUT. IF KYPRIANOU CAN CONVINCE THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND OTHER MODERATES OF THE RIGHT THAT HE IS NOT GOING TO FOLLOW LEFT-WING POLICIES, HE MAY BE ABLE TO WIN THE FEBRUARY ELECTION AND CONTINUE AS PRESIDENT.

9. COMMENT: GHALANOS' COMMENTS ARE SOMEWHAT SELF-SERVING. HE IS A SUPPORTER OF KYPRIANOU AND STANDS TO BENEFIT BY KYPRIANOU'S CONTINUATION IN OFFICE. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN OFFERED THE POST OF PARLIAMENTARY SPOKESMAN FOR HIS PARTY, REPLACING NEW HOUSE PRESIDENT ALECOS MICHAELIDES, BUT HAD TURNED THE POST DOWN IN FAVOR OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE. HE HINTED HE MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE TO BECOME FOREIGN MINISTER IF KYPRIANOU WINS THE FEBRUARY ELECTION (WE DOUBT THIS VERY MUCH). ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN, HE SAID IF IT APPEARS KYPRIANOU WILL WIN ONLY 50-55 PERCENT OF A POPULAR VOTE HE WILL DESERT KYPRIANOU. HE WILL ONLY STAY IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IF IT APPEARS THAT KYPRIANOU WILL WIN 60-70 PERCENT OF THE VOTE.

10. WE ARE GENERALLY AVOIDING ANY SHOW OF ACTIVE INTEREST IN CURRENT, INTENSE POLITICAL DELIBERATIONS AS THIS WOULD BE CERTAIN TO BE CONSTRUED BY ONE FACTION OR ANOTHER AS INTERFERENCE. AS A MISSION WE ARE ALSO NOT REPORTING THE MYRIAD HOURLY RUMORS THAT ARE FED TO US BY FRIENDS. WE DO REPORT THE GHALANOS CONVERSATION, AS WE WILL CERTAIN OTHERS BECAUSE (A) IT REFLECTS THE VIEWS AT THIS JUNCTURE OF A KEY "ESTABLISHMENT" SUPPORTER OF KYPRIANOU AND (B) BECAUSE
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IT ALSO SHOWS HOW POTENTIALLY EPHERMERAL KYPRIANOU'S SUPPORT IS. IN THIS CONVERSATION WE CONSIDER THAT EVEN THE SUPPORT OF AKEL AND EDEK WOULD BE QUESTIONABLE IF A BANDWAGON DEVELOPS FOR PASCALIDES.
CRAWFORD

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